

HIV/AIDS AND USE OF MEDIA IN SOME SELECTED FISHING COMMUNITIES OF KAINJI LAKE BASIN

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of communication channels on the enlightenment of HIV/AIDS campaign cannot be overemphasised in the fight against the disease and poor access to conventional information media may undermine the struggle. It was in order to provide empirical basis for communication support for this endeavour that this study investigated HIV/AIDS and use media in Yauri emirate of Kainji lake basin. A total of 187 respondents were sampled in ten fishing communities for data collection through the use of questionnaires and further subjected to descriptive analysis. Findings from the study reveal that 84.5% of the respondents had their primary occupation in fisheries related activities and only 15.5% were into skilled labour (such as welding, carpentry) and trading in other products. 98.4% of the respondents at one time or the other had heard about the disease but had not translated to the knowledge on mode of transmission. Majority (63.1%) of the respondents heard of HIV/AIDS on the radio, 1.1% heard through NGOs and only 6.4% through television received HIV/AIDS information. Some recommendations were made because of the vulnerability of fishing communities to HIV/AIDS

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important tool in bringing about social changes and to be specific bring about a desirable changes in the behaviour that is necessary to fight HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS prevention through information, education and communication can bring about behavioural change that slow down or stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. The combined use of media as well as traditional and interpersonal media is important in creating awareness on HIV/AIDS. Public and private sectors, government agencies and ministries, NGOs, international agencies and organizations are engaged in the HIV/AIDS mass media campaign. Well designed mass media campaigns can have beneficial effects not only on health knowledge and attitudes but also on behaviours which can translate into a major public health impact given the wide reach of the mass media (Noar, 2006). Yahaya(2003) observed that various strategies have been adopted by different groups and organizations to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. These campaigns are carried and sustained through various ways and means. Chief amongst these are the television and radio jingles, talk-show programmes and drama presentation, newspaper and magazine adverts, posters, out door billboards, pamphlets and hand bills. Others include door-to-door campaigns, musical concerts and road-side shows. Nigeria is the most populous in Africa and it has been noted that the country has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in West Africa. Almost all Nigerian cities had received lectures, seminars and workshops on HIV/AIDS, the activities of John Hopkins's Centre for Communication programme(JHU/CCP) had consciously and intentionally educated Nigerians through music(Yahaya, 2003) unfortunately fishing communities had benefited little or at all from their activities . In this study, we examined HIV/AIDS information and use of mass media among the fisherfolk in selected fishing communities of Kainji Lake Basin.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted between 20th -28th March, 2009 in Kainji lake basin comprising of Niger and Kebbi States with the following neighbouring emirates Kontagora, Borgu and Yauri . For this study, the sample was taken from Yauri emirates from the following communities: Wara, Wawu, Tunga Mairuwa, Zamare, Rukubalo, Yauri, Rashe Salkawa, Hella, Barashi Tunga Alhaji Sharo. The selections of these communities were based on accessibility, level of fisheries activities and traditional institutions. A total of 187 questionnaires and 20 interview guides for key informants were used in the communities and further subjected for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio – economic information are necessary for a study of this magnitude. Therefore, 63.6% of the respondents were males while 36.4% were females. Generally, male population usually predominate in the fishing communities, the variation may be as a result women restriction to their household that is, they are in Purdah, which buttresses the findings of Yahaya, 1999. It can be assumed that the men are more likely to be aware of this deadly disease which is in consonant with UNAIDS, (1998) that almost twice as many men as women were aware of HIV/AIDS.

76.0% of the respondents were still in their active (reproductive) age, that is, 15 – 45 years. 24% were above 46 years. These are the active groups in agricultural production and they are crucial to agricultural development. The respondents were mainly young people implying that they were in sexually active ages. This age group falls within the findings of NDHS, 2003 that majority of those who contract the HIV/AIDS virus fall under the sexually active age. Thus, they are the very people who are vital to the economic future of the rural communities where poverty is dominant.

Majority of the respondents (78.1%) were married, 21.4% were single while a negligible percent (0.5%) were widow. None of the respondent was divorced neither separated in the study area. This is an indication of a tendency for sexual continuation, particularly among the married people of the fishing communities. With regards to belief, 84.5% were Muslim faithful, only 15.5% practiced Christianity and 0.5% claimed to be idol worshipper. With this finding the religion supports multiple relationships that is men having more than one wife, it is more acceptable for them to have multiple relationships than for women. Majority (58.7%) were into polygamy, 2.1% were into monogamy and 49.2% could not response. This is not surprising because they are Muslim faithful. This is a major obstacle that must be overcome if the fight will be successful in the muslim dominated areas.

In terms of education, only 18.7% had primary education and the same percent for respondents who had secondary school education. More than half of the respondents (57.2%) had no formal education. From observation and interaction with few respondents many of the people are not interested in the western education while some are more interested in sending their children to Quaranic School within and outside the community than attending western education. This has made them not see the need for at least primary school in their immediate environment. Therefore, the low level of western education may affect the knowledge of devastating HIV/AIDS that is ravaging globally and call for an alternative approach in reaching the people for better understanding.

The study revealed that 84.5% of the respondents had their primary occupation in fisheries related activities and only 15.5% were into skilled labour (such as welding, carpentry) and trading in other products. 27.8% had secondary occupation such as firewood cutting, food hawking and haulage. The result corroborates Neiland *et al*, 2005 that combination of activities ranging from catching, processing, trading and transportation are important occupation in the fishing communities. (See table 1)

On the awareness of HIV/AIDS, 98.4% of the respondents at one time or the other had heard about the disease in support of Olowosegun *et al* (2008) but did not know much about the organism responsible for HIV/AIDS pandemic (locally known as Kajanmu in Hausa). Only 30% was able to mention the virus, though they had an idea of what it means as many of them gave different interpretations of AIDS in their local language. Those who had heard of AIDS heard mostly from the radio. This corroborates a similar finding by Orubuloye *et al*, (1995) which reported that prisoners heard most of the information on AIDS from the radio. The result does reflect the true situation and with low level of education, different respondents had different understanding and perception to what could be cause of the disease. This may lead to misconception of information on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS related matters in the fishing communities. 70% said they don't know name of the responsible for disease. The findings from fishing communities followed the trend of the result obtained by Yahaya (2000). The spread of HIV/AIDS may be on the increase due ignorance of the people. On the knowledge of prevention, this study revealed that 57.8% of the respondents knew that abstinence from premarital sex reduce the infection, 16.6% said faithfulness to one's partner should be emphasized. Only 10.2% believed the use of condom while 4.8% don't know. 10.2% of the respondents knew non sharing of sharp object and sterilized any sharp object can reduce infection.

Table 1 showing socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency(F)	Percent(%)
Sex		
Male	119	63.6
Female	68	36.4
Total	187	100
Age		
15-25	45	24.1
26-35	55	29.4
36-45	42	22.5
46-55	28	15.5
Above 55	17	9.1
Total	187	100
Marital Status		
Single	40	21.4
Married	146	78.1
Widow	1	0.5
Separated	-	-
Divorced	-	-
Total	187	100
Number of wife		
One	4	2.1
Two	59	31.6
Three	27	14.4
More than three	5	2.7
No response	92	49.2
Total	187	100
Religion		
Islam	157	84.5
Christianity	29	15.5
Idol	1	0.5
Total	187	100
Education		
Primary	35	18.7
Secondary	35	18.7
Tertiary	5	2.7
Adult education	5	2.7
No formal education	107	57.2
Total	187	100
Primary Occupation		
Fishing	23	12.3
Farming-fishing	23	12.3
Trading in fish	15	8.0
Processing of fish	40	21.4
Boat construction	27	14.4
Craft/gear making	7	3.7
Skilled labour	5	2.7
Others	29	5.5
Total	187	100
Secondary Occupation		
Skilled labour	1	0.5
Firewood cutting	2	1.1
Food vendor	45	24.1
Transporting	4	2.1
No response	135	72.0
Total	187	100

On confirmation of the disease on victim, 42.8% of the respondents believed that someone with multiple health complications is positive to HIV/AIDS. 12.8% said by ascertaining the number of sexual partners and 33.6%

said they don't know. This is worrisome considering the various programme going on the subject. Although, only 42.2% agreed that they are at risk and 45.5% said that they are not risk in any form while 12.3% don't know whether at risk or not. 6.4% and 10.7% said the risks were at average and high risk of HIV/AIDS respectively. From observation, sharing of sharp objects are common habit in the fishing communities selected and it is important to discourage the use sharing of sharp object for manicure which is a common activity because the knowledge of the people on mode of transmission is majorly limited to heterosexual activities in the study area. This was demonstrated by the seeming ignorance of the people who did not know the implication of someone sharing the same razor in cutting their nails. This finding corroborates Iwoh (2004), who reported that there was low knowledge of HIV/AIDS/STIs among prison staff in Nigeria. It also revealed that most of the respondents' knowledge of HIV/AIDS is limited to sexual intercourse with the opposite sex. Interestingly, many of them were unaware that homosexual acts, unscreened blood transfusion, sharing of sharp instruments as well other risky practices of AIDS are as risky as sexual intercourse. More so, the fact that such acts as tattooing and sharing of blades are common practices in the fishing communities, which may expose them to HIV/AIDS. However, out of all the means of contracting HIV/AIDS virus, sexual intercourse was the most commonly known to the people. The result support the finding of Isibor and Ajuwon (2004), in their study on journalists' knowledge of AIDS and attitude toward people living with HIV, found a number of misconceptions amongst people concerning HIV/AIDS-related issues. 50.2% of the respondents met /know people living with the virus or have died from the infection while 49.8% said they have met /know one that has HIV/AIDS. The situation in fishing communities calls for urgent attention. It is surprising to know that large number of respondents (66%) could assess or determine their risk level of HIV/AIDS pandemic; this fact is not far fetch from the characteristics of the fishing communities as highly mobile and daily disposable income for loose relaxation activities. The risk perception of the respondents on HIV/AIDS is high, 90.4% believed that it is a serious deadly disease but lack the information that could help them to live dignified life. Only 5.3% saw it as an imaginary disease. (See table 2)

Table 2: Knowledge of HIV/AIDS in the fishing communities

Variables	Frequency(F)	Percent(%)
Heard of HIV/AIDS		
Yes	184	98.4
No	3	1.6
Total	187	187
Name of microbe		
HIV	56	30
I don't know	131	70
Total	187	100
Prone HIV/AIDS Risk		
Yes	79	42.2
No	85	45.5
I don't know	23	12.3
Total	187	100
Assessment of risk perception		
Low	31	16.6
Average	12	6.4
Very high	20	10.7
I don't know	26	13.9
No response	98	52.4
Total	187	100
Perception of AIDS		
A serious deadly disease	169	90.4
An imaginary disease	10	5.3
A disease caused by witches	1	0.5
No response	7	3.7
Total	187	100

The effectiveness of mass media in changing HIV/AIDS related behaviours among young in developing countries, also support the effectiveness of mass media interventions to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS, to influence some social norms, to increase the amount of interpersonal communication and to boost awareness (Bertrand and Anhang, 2006). The findings on the sources information received in the fishing communities revealed that 63.1% of the respondents heard of HIV/AIDS on the radio, 1.1% heard through NGOs and only 6.4% through television. The use of radio may be most effective channel of creating awareness because wide coverage and at least a member of the household have a battery cell transistor. The low use of television is attributed to lack of electricity in some of the study area except for those who can afford generator and satellites were the respondents who first heard through television. Non governmental organizations activities on HIV/AIDS campaign are not felt and posters/handbills have not been effective because of low of western education. 54% of the respondents listen to radio almost everyday while 29.9% not at all, it is not surprising it only shows the high level of ignorance and may be concerned about their daily bread as they are always moving from one place to another. Some of the respondents had received HIV/AIDS messages either from radio or television which are disseminated in Hausa language (75.9%). This result supports the finding of Orubuloye *et al.*, (1995) on availability of HIV/AIDS information to the people. The respondents (52.4%) preferred radio than television the reason being that many if not all the community lack electricity supply with the few ones that has electricity received poor supply. The use of television may not be appropriate due to poor reception or no reception at all makes it unreliable as medium for supplying HIV/AIDS information in the fishing communities of Kainji Lake Basin. 62% of the respondents said radio is still the frequent means of supplying information on HIV/AIDS and 13.9% got information from family members/friends. This is because majority own a radio transistor. There is tendency that the respondents may not get clarification and first hand information on HIV/AIDS, this might be the reason for narrowed knowledge on mode of transmission that is limited heterosexual behaviour in the fishing communities. Although, traditional music could have formed an important channel but the findings recorded low score for disseminating HIV/AIDS information through traditional musicians. Akinyele (1986) had reported success of this strategy in the popularization of anti cholera campaign and Yahaya (2000) had successfully exploited the enormous potentials of traditional music in HIV/AIDS in both rural and urban settlements in Niger State, Nigeria. This approach should be adopted in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Kainji Lake Basin. Organizational support is a vital tool for the fight; most of the fishing communities hardly recognized any except for the religious groups who are making frantic efforts to educate the people with information available to them. Only 17.6% and 38% of respondents in Christian religious group and Islamic group received information on HIV/AIDS in one of their meetings respectively. It also revealed that 32.1% said people discussed on HIV/AIDS as a subject within the locality. This percentage is low and may enhance high level of stigmatization peradventure a community member found living with the virus. On information available, only 28.9% rate access to information high in the study area. Sensitization is a key tool in the struggle for the fight, it unfortunate that only 20.9% of the respondents at one time or the other attended a seminar or workshop on HIV/AIDS. On the overall the lesson learnt in the messages on HIV/AIDS is abstinence. There is need to educate the rural settlers beyond abstinence because these are people that constitute over 70% of the Nigerian population

Table: 3 showing the sources of information on HIV/AIDS in the communities

Variables	Frequency(F)	Percent(%)
Channel of awareness		
Family/friends	49	26.2
Radio	118	63.1
Television	12	6.4
NGOs	2	1.1
Posters/handbills	6	3.2
Total	187	100
Listen to radio		
Everyday/almost everyday	101	54.0
At least once a week	18	9.6
Not at all	56	29.9
No response	12	6.4
Total	187	100
Heard of HIV/AIDS on radio programme		

Table: 3 showing the sources of information on HIV/AIDS in the communities (cont...)

Yes	136	72.7
No	47	25.2
No response	4	2.2
Total	187	100
Heard of television on HIV/AIDS		
Yes	68	36.4
No	115	61.5
Others	4	2.1
Total	187	100
Number of days/week you received information through these channels		
One	48	25.7
Two	48	25.7
Three	52	27.8
More than three	23	12.3
No response	16	8.6
Total	187	100
Preferred media		
Television	12	6.4
Radio	98	52.4
Both	38	20.3
No response	39	20.9
Total	187	100
Frequent means of Information on HIV/AIDS		
Family member/friends	26	13.9
Radio	116	62.0
Posters/handbills	23	12.3
Television	-	-
Traditional media	4	2.1
No response	18	9.7
Total	187	100
Organizational support on HIV/AIDS Information in the locality		
Christian religious groups	33	17.6
Islamic religious groups	71	38.0
Traditional council	11	5.9
Media	5	2.7
Federal government	7	3.7
State government	14	7.5
Community leaders	6	3.2
None	40	21.4
Total	187	100
Lessons from media programme		
Testing for HIV/AIDS	37	19.8
Treatment of STIs	5	2.7
Treatment of HIV/AIDS	7	3.7
Use of condom	24	12.8

Table: 3 showing the sources of information on HIV/AIDS in the communities (cont...)

Abstaining from sex	28	20.3
Stop stigmatization	17	9.1
Being faithful to sexual partners	27	14.4
Mode of transmission	1	0.5
It pays to work hard	1	0.5
No response	30	16
Total	187	100
Language used for HIV/AIDS information		
Hausa	142	75.9
Fulfulde	2	1.1
Nupe	1	0.5
English	30	16.0
Other	12	6.4
Total	187	100
HIV/AIDS seminar/workshop		
Yes	39	20.9
No	148	79.1
Total	187	100
Talk about HIV/AIDS in the locality		
Yes	60	32.1
No	127	67.9
Total	187	100
Rate of access to HIV/AIDS information in the locality		
Low	21	11.2
High	54	28.9
No response	112	59.9
Total	187	100

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that radio is the most acknowledged accessible source of HIV/AIDS information to residents of the fishing communities, even though with limited variation that exists among the people. Television is not appropriate because most of the fishing communities lack power supply. The use of print media or extension publications for HIV/AIDS campaigns in fishing communities may be published in Hausa language that is almost lingua franca in the area. In addition, for the benefit of Muslim who may not be literate in English or Hausa but can read Arabic should be targeted with brief of such messages using this medium that is most appropriate to them. Also, traditional music should be integrated into HIV/AIDS campaign programme in Nigeria for the benefit of the grassroots population that are mostly excluded from conventional communication channel due to absence of infrastructure.

Finally, given the significant roles of the mass media in development, policies directed at combating HIV/AIDS should take opportunities offered by mass media since HIV/AIDS is developmental issue. Therefore, it is suggested that for Nigeria to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in agriculture, health, education, poverty reduction and economic regeneration, the government should utilize a multi media approach to complement on going outreach strategies on HIV/AIDS.

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